

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 ISLAMA 10794 01 OF 02 141428Z

43

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AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMCONSUL KARACHI

AMCONSUL LAHORE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ISLAMABAD 10794

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, PK

SUBJ: POSITIVE PROGNOSIS FOR BALUCHISTAN

REF: A) KARACHI 1789; B) KARACHI 2081; C) ISLAMABAD 10017

SUMMARY: A BRIEF BUT BUSY BALUCHISTAN TOUR LEFT THE EMBASSY AND KARACHI CONGEN OFFICERS WHO JOINTLY PREPARED THIS REPORT WITH THE IMPRESSION THAT THE PROGNOSIS FOR THAT TROUBLED PROVINCE WAS NOTABLY MORE POSITIVE THAN IT HAD BEEN TEN WEEKS EARLIER. SECURITY FORCES IN QUETTA SEEMED LESS OBVIOUS BUT MORE EFFECTIVE; ARMY ACTION AGAINST THE DISSIDENT TRIBESMEN HAD REPORTEDLY BROKEN THEIR HOLD IN ONE OF THE TWO DISTURBED AREAS. THIS DEVELOPMENT, BHUTTO'S SUSTAINED POLITICAL COMMITMENT, AND LARGESSE FROM ISLAMABAD HAD CLEARLY STRENGTHENED THE CORRUPT PROVINCIAL MINISTRY, ATTRACTED SOME ELEMENTS TO THE RULING PARTY, AND DEMORALIZED THE
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PAGE 02 ISLAMA 10794 01 OF 02 141428Z

OPPOSITION. INFUSIONS OF MEN AND MONEY HAVE PRODUCED SIGNS

OF LIFE IN THE RUDIMENTARY CIVIL ADMINISTRATION. NONETHELESS, TRUE POLITICAL INTEGRATION OF THE PROVINCE AND ADVANCE TOWARD AN ECONOMY MORE LIKE THAT FOUND ELSEWHERE IN PAKISTAN (WHICH IRAN AND THE USA MIGHT DIRECTLY ENCOURAGE) WILL BE COMPLICATED UNDERTAKE

END SUMMARY.

1. ATMOSPHERICS: ONLY THE AIR IN BALUCHISTAN IS CLEAR AND BRACING. REPORTING ON THE SPRAWLING, STRATEGIC PROVINCE IS INEVITABLY IMPRESSIONISTIC; DUST IS ALWAYS THROWN IN OUTSIDE OBSERVERS' EYES TO CLOUD OR SLANT THEIR VISION. THE KARACHI CONSUL GENERAL VISITED QUETTA TEN WEEKS AGO (REF A) AND FOUND IT A TENSE ARMED CAMP PRESIDED OVER BY A CORRUPT, PARALYZED MINISTRY AND A DEMORALIZED BUREAUCRACY. URBAN TERRORISM AND MOUNTAIN INSURGENCY HAD SAPPED PUBLIC CONFIDENCE. SINCE THEN, THE ARMY HAD CONDUCTED ONE SUCCESSFUL CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE MARRIS AND MOVED AGAINST THE MENGALS; TOURING PRIME MINISTER BHUTTO HAD AGAIN DEMONSTRATED HIS STRONG SUPPORT FOR THE PROVINCIAL MINISTRY AND CIVIL/POLICE ADMINISTRATION AND ONCE MORE COMMITTED HIS POLITICAL PRESTIGE TO A SUCCESSFUL RESOLUTION OF THE BALUCHISTAN PROBLEM (REFS B AND C); AND THE PROVISION OF LARGER FEDERAL FUNDS HAD CONTINUED SLOWLY TO MODIFY ECONOMIC STRUCTURES AND POLITICAL LOYALTIES. THUS WHEN THE EMBASSY POLITICAL COUNSELOR AND THE KARACHI CONGEN POLITICAL OFFICER SOJOURNED IN TWO DISTRICT HEADQUARTERS TOWNS (SIBI AND DADHAR) AND SPENT THREE DAYS IN QUESTTA (NOVEMBER 5-9), THEY SAW AGAINST THE GLOOMY BACKDROP OF PASTORAL POVERTY, TRIBAL FEUDALISM, AND POLITICAL CORRUPTION, SOME SIGNS OF POSITIVE, PURPOSEFUL ACTIVITY. THEY RECEIVED A WARM WELCOME FROM POLITICIANS AND OFFICIALS SEEMINGLY MORE CONFIDENT THAN BEFORE OF THEIR ABILITY TO CONTROL AND IMPROVE A DIFFICULT SITUATION. THE OFFICERS LEFT WITH THE IMPRESSION THAT THIS CONFIDENCE WAS SPREADING AMONG SETTLED AGRICULTURAL AND LESS TRADITION-BOUND GROUPS FAVORABLY DISPOSED TOWARD THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AND ITS INTEGRATIVE PROGRAMS, CAUSING DESPONDENCY AND DISARRAY AMONG MEMBERS OF THE OPPOSITION WHO SINCERELY OR SELF-INTERESTEDLY INVOKE THE CAUSE OF PROVINCIAL AUTONOMY IN AN EFFORT TO INFLUENCE THE PACE

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PAGE 03 ISLAMA 10794 01 OF 02 141428Z

AND DIRECTION OF POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CHANGE IN BALUCHISTAN.

2. SECURITY MEASURES: VISITING US OFFICIALS WERE STRUCK BY THE RELAXATION OF THE TENSE ATMOSPHERE WHICH HAD PREVAILED IN QUETTA IN RECENT MONTHS. DAYTIME POLICE AND MILITARY PRESENCE IN AND AROUND THE CITY APPEARED NOTABLY LESS OBVIOUS THAN IN LATE AUGUST (REF A) BUT REPORTING OFFICERS RECEIVED THE IMPRESSION THAT LESS NUMEROUS SECURITY FORCES WERE BEING

USED MORE EFFECTIVELY (POSSIBLY REFLECTING THE RECENT INSTALLATION OF INSPECTOR GENERAL OF POLICE ARIF AND ARMY V CORPS COMMANDER GENERAL AKBAR KHAN. FEWER BUT FIRMER POLICEMEN COVERED GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS; FROM DUSK TO DAWN NO VEHICLE MOVED MORE THAN A FEW BLOCKS WITHOUT BEING STOPPED AND INSPECTED (OF WHICH EVEN OFFICIALS MILDLY COMPLAINED). TERRORIST EXPLOSIONS (SLIGHTLY SOPHISTICATED PLASTIC COMPETING WITH THE TRADITIONAL DYNAMITE), INCLUDING AN UNPUBLICIZED ATTEMPT TO ASSASSINATE LAW MINISTER PARACHA, LGRE CREDITED TO AFGHAN AGENTS BY THE AUTHORITIES AND TO THE AUTHORITIES BY OPPOSITION NATIONAL AWAMI PARTY (NAP) STALWARTS. OFFICIALS CONFIDENTLY RECOUNTED THEIR SUCCESS IN APPREHENDING TERRORISTS; NAP PARTISANS, NOTING A FEW WERE EVER INJURED IN THE BLASTS, MAINTAINED THAT TERRORISM WAS PERPETRATED FALSELY TO IMPLICATE THEM.

3. ALTHOUGH MOST OFFICIALS DID NOT GO DEEPLY INTO THE PROGRESS OF ARMY COUNTER-GUERRILLA MEASURES, NEARLY ALL WELL-INFORMED OUTSIDERS AGREED THAT THE AUGUST-SEPTEMBER CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE MARRIS HAD LEFT THEM "CRUSHED". THEY NOTED THAT THE FEW TRIBAL/STUDENT INSURGENTS AT LARGE COULD DO LITTLE HARM. THESE OBSERVERS SAID THE ARMY WAS SUBSEQUENTLY MOVING AGAINST THE DISSIDENT MENGALS AND PREDICTED A SIMILARLY SUCCESSFUL RESULT. (THE US OFFICIALS SPECULATED THAT BHUTTO'S OCTOBER 15 AMNESTY DEADLINE HAD BEEN ADDRESSED TO THE MARRIS AND THE EXTENSION TO DECEMBER 15 TO THE MENGALS.) THE DIVISIONAL COMMISSIONER OF SIBI (COVERING THE MARRI/BUGTI TRIBAL AGENCY, INTER ALIA) NOTED THAT NO EVIDENCE OF AFGHAN-ORIGIN ARMS OR COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT HAD COME TO LIGHT, NOR WAS HE AWARE OF ANY TRAINING OF LOCAL BALUCH IN AFGHANISTAN. HE ASSUMED THAT MONEY AND AGENTS HAD FILTERED DOWN FROM THE NORTH.

4. THE ECONOMIC APPEAL OF POLITICS: THE PROVINCIAL MINISTRY,
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CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 ISLAMA 10794 01 OF 02 141428Z

COMPOSED PRIMARILY OF BALUCH SARDARS AND PATHAN MULLAHS, SEEMED EVEN MORE FIRMLY ENSCONCED IN THE SEAT OF POWER THAN EARLIER. DURING BHUTTO'S MID-OCTOBER BALUCHISTAN TOUR, HE EMPHASIZED THE IMPORTANCE HE ATTACHES TO THE PRESENCE OF THIS THEORETICALLY "RESPONSIBLE" MINISTRY IN QUETTA. (THIS IMPORTANCE STEMS FROM BOTH DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS. THAT THE PRIME MINISTER MAY LOOK UPON IT IN COSMETIC TERMS DOES NOT ALTER THE PRACTICAL EFFORT.) IT WAS DEPRESSINGLY OBVIOUS EVEN TO CASUAL OBSERVERS THAT THE PROVINCIAL MINISTERS AND THE PRIME MINISTER HAD AGREED THAT HE WOULD KEEP THEM IN OFFICE (EVEN GIVING THEM WHAT HE WAS QUOTED AS CALLING "ARTIFICIAL RESPIRATION") PROVIDED THEY GAVE HIM NO TROUBLE, IN RETURN FOR WHICH THEY WOULD BE PERMITTED TO DISTRIBUTE THE GROWING NUMBER OF GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS, PERMITS, AND JOBS TO THEIR RETAINERS AT NO SMALL

PROFIT TO THEMSELVES. THE MINISTRY CONTINUES TO ENJOY A
NARROW BUT SAFE ASSEMBLY MAJORITY, AND THERE APPEARED LITTLE
SPECULATION THAT ANY SIGNIFICANT CHANGE WOULD TAKE PLACE.
THE PROSPECT OF ANY GOP MOVE TO RELEASE THE IMPRISONED NAP
LEADERS AND THEIR BEING GIVEN EVEN A SMALL SHARE OF THE POWER
SEEMED REMOTE BOTH TO THEIR FOLLOWERS AND FOES.

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 01 ISLAMA 10794 02 OF 02 141441Z

43

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7637

INFO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY DACCA

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 ISLAMABAD 10794

5. AS PART OF HIS LONGER-TERM POLITICAL STRATEGY, THE PRIME
MINISTER HAS CONTINUED TO WORK WITH SECOND-RANK TRIBAL
CHIEFTAINS TO STRENGTHEN HIS PAKISTAN PEOPLE'S PARTY (PPP).
HOWEVERMUCH HE MAY HARP ON THE ANTI-SARDARI SYSTEM THEME,
THE PRIME MINISTER AND HIS SUPPORTERS APPARENTLY REALIZE
THAT THEY MUST WORK THROUGH THAT SYSTEM, AT LEAST FOR THE
TIME BEING. IN RECENT WEEKS HE HAS ACHIEVED WHAT EVEN
SKEPTICS ADMIT ARE SEVERAL BREAKTHROUGHS: THE ALLEGIANCE
OF THE NUMEROUS AND POTENTIALLY IMPORTANT BALUCH JAMALI
CLAN, AGRICULTURISTS DEPENDENT ON INDUS WATER FOR PROSPERITY,
HAS BEEN FURTHER CONSOLIDATED BY INCLUSION OF A FAMILY SCION

IN THE FEDERAL CABINET; DODA KHAN ZARAKZAI, BROHI/BALUCH CHIEF OF JHALAWAN IN KALAT DIVISION AND OLD RIVAL OF JAILED NAP LEADER ATTAULLAH MENGAL, HAS PROCLAIMED HIS CONVERSION TO THE PPP; EVEN THE GOVERNOR--THE ONE-TIME FEUDAL KHAN OF KALAT--WAS CONVINCED TO DIRECT HIS SON, PRINCE MOINUDDIN, TO PLEDGE HIS SUPPORT TO THE RULING PARTY. CHIEF MINISTER
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 ISLAMA 10794 02 OF 02 141441Z

MIR GHULAM QADIR KHAN CONFIDED TO THE US OFFICIALS THAT HE WILL ANNOUNCE HIS ADHESION WHEN THE PRIME MINISTER VISITS BALUCHISTAN LATER THIS MONTH. OVER THE LONGER TERM, THE RECENT PPP REORGANIZATION (REF. B) AND ESPECIALLY THE CENTRIPEDAL ATTRACTION OF THE RULING PARTY WILL ACT UPON THE AVARICIOUS, AMBITIOUS, AND FEARFUL AT ALL LEVELS; MANY PRIEST-RIDDEN BUT COMMERCIALY-ORIENTED PATHANS, WHO CAN FLOURISH ONLY UNDER AN ACQUIESCENT GOVERNMENT, HAVE REPORTEDLY FELT THE LEAT OR SEEN THE LIGHT. THE PPP REORGANIZATION HAS ENCOURAGED NEWLY-APPOINTED PARTY OFFICIALS TO PRESS, AT LEAST PRIVATELY, FOR EARLY ELECTIONS WHICH THEY VIEW AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO CONFIRM AND EXTEND RECENT PARTY GAINS. SUCH ELECTIONS WOULD PROBABLY SERVE THAT PURPOSE; HOWEVER, ONE ASTUTE OBSRVOR NOTED THAT THERE WOULD BE AREAS IN WHICH THE PPP WOULD HAVE DIFFICULTY, EVEN WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATION, BECAUSE OF OPPOSITION SARDARS' CONTINUING INFLUENCE.

6. THE INSURGENTS' DEFEATS, THE PRIME MINISTER'S DETERMINATION, AND THE FINANCIAL BENEFITS OF COOPERATION WITH HIM HAVE APPARENTLY DEMORALIZED AND POSSIBLY DIVIDED THE BALUCHISTAN NAP. BY ALL ACCOUNTS THE NAP CAN STILL COUNT ON THE SUPPORT OF THE SMALL BUT VOCAL STUDENT COMMUNITY ORGANIZED UNDER THE AEGIS OF THE BALUCHISTAN STUDENTS ORGANIZATION (BSO). THEY ARE RESENTFUL OF WHAT THEY CONSIDER ETHNINN LINGUISTIC, EDUCATIONAL, AND EMPLOYMENT DISCRIMINATION AGAINST THEM EVEN IN "THEIR" PROVINCE--WHICH OBJECTIVE OBSERVERS MORE ACCURATELY RECOGNIZE AS INEVITABLE GIVEN THE BACKWARDNESS OF THE AREA. SOME STUDENTS WERE EASILY LED BY BSO MILITANTS TO TAKE TO THE HILLS AND MOST RESPOND TO PROTEST STRIKE CALLS. (THE TWO-YEAR-OLD BALUCHISTAN UNIVERSITY HAS BEEN CLOSED FOR SEVERAL WEEKS OVER A PERCEIVED EMPLOYMENT-DISCRIMINATION ISSUE.) THE MORE PRIMITIVE TRIBESMEN ALSO WILL CONTINUE TO BACK THE NAP AS LONG AS THEIR SARDARA DO. BUT FACED WITH INCREASINGLY GLOOMY PROSPECTS, SOME HARASSED NAP LEADERS, REPEATEDLY DENOUNCED AS ANTI-NATIONAL BY THE RPIME MINISTER, SEEM LESS SOLIDLY BEHIND THEIR IMPRESONED CHIEFS THAN BEFORE. THERE ARE SOMEWHAT PARADOXICAL SIGNS THAT A PRIMARILY PATHAN NAP FACTION IS STILL FAITHFUL TO THE JAILED BALUCH SARDARS, WHILE SOME BALUCH NAP LEGISLATORS MAY BE READY TO RESPOND TO THE
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PAGE 03 ISLAMA 10794 02 OF 02 141441Z

PRIME MINISTER'S THREATS AND PROMISES BY SEEKING A COMPROMISE WITH HIM. EVEN THE MORE MILITANT NAP LEADERS, THOUGH WORRIED ABOUT THEIR OWN CHANCES OF STAYING OUT OF JAIL (AND WITH GOOD REASON--ONE NAP SENATOR WAS ARRESTED NOVEMBER 7), SEEM PERSUADED THAT THE PRIME MINISTER WILL NOT BAN THEIR PARTY. THEY SEE GREATER GAIN FOR HIM IN KEEPING NAP UP AND AROUND AS A FOIL IN HIS EFFORTS TO RALLY PATRIOTIC SENTIMENT.

7. ADMINISTRATION AND DEVELOPMENT: VAST AREAS OF WHAT IS NOW BALUCHISTAN WERE NOT REGULARLY ADMINISTERED BY CIVIL AND POLICE OFFICIALS UNTIL THE PROVINCE WAS CREATED IN 1970; EVEN TODAY THE LAWS AND JUDICIAL PROCEDURES GOVERNING THE REST OF PAKISTAN ARE NOT UNIVERSALLY APPLIED. THE OPPOSITION COALITION (NAP-JUI) GOVERNMENT OF BIZENJO AND KHAIR BAKHSH MARRI OUSTED LARGE NUMBERS OF CIVILIAN ADMINISTRATORS AND TECHNICIANS WHO HAD ONLY RECENTLY BEEN BROUGHT IN FROM OTHER PARTS OF PAKISTAN. IT IS ONLY IN THIS CALENDAR YEAR THAT THE POLITICAL SITUATION HAS PERMITTED BOTH THE RESTAFFING OF THE ADMINISTRATION PRIMARILY WITH OUTSIDERS AND THE TRAINING OF LOCAL RESIDENTS FOR POSITIONS IN THE CIVIL BUREAUCRACY. DEMORALIZATION AND UNCERTAINTY STILL AFFLICT THE SECRETARIAT. THAT THE ARMY HAS BEEN GIVEN "NATION-BUILDING" TASKS, AND NOT ONLY IN DISTURBED AREAS, IS THUS NOT SURPRISING.

8. THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IS SPENDING MILLIONS WHERE ITS PREDECESSORS BEGRUDGED THOUSANDS. PERHAPS INEVITABLY, MUCH IS BEING SIPHONED OFF BY SOME MINISTERS AND BUREAUCRATS; CONTRACTS ARE LET (ESPECIALLY FOR ROAD WORK) IN THE FULL KNOWLEDGE THAT THE MINOR TRIBAL NOTABLES TURNED LABOR CONTRACTORS WILL POCKET A SIZEABLE PERCENTAGE OF THE FUNDS; THERE IS GOOD RASON TO BELIEVE THAT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT MAY WELL BE MORE INTERESTED IN THEIR LOYALTY AND POLITICAL COMMITMENT THAN THEIR FINANCIAL INTEGRITY.

9. IN THIS SITUATION, FOREIGN COUNTRIES WISHING TO ASSIST DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS IN BALUCHISTAN SHOULD RECOGNIZE THAT THE RESULTS OF THEIR EFFORTS MAY HAVE IMMEDIATE, FAVORABLE (FOR THE DONOR) POLITICAL IMPACT BUT LEAD ONLY TO LIMITED ECONOMIC GAINS. IRAN SEEMS CLEARLY TO HAVE DECIDED THAT THE SHAH WILL BE SEEN TO BE DOING GOOD IN BALICHISTAN; THE PAPERS

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PAGE 04 ISLAMA 10794 02 OF 02 141441Z

FOR SEVERAL PROJECTS ("IN HAND", AS THE IRANIAN CONSUL GENERAL OPTIMISTICALLY PUT IT) ARE MOVING SLOWLY THROUGH THE

PAKISTANI AND IRANIAN BUREAUCRACIES. THE BRITISH CONSUL
GENERAL IN KARACHI IS INCLINED TO PRESS HMG FOR SOME VISIBLE
BRITISH ASSISTANCE PRESENCE IN BALUCHISTAN. PROVINCIAL
OFFICIALS AND MINISTERS WERE NOT RETICENT IN SUGGESTING
AVENUES FOR POSSIBLE US ASSISTANCE; BUT ANY DECISION ABOUT
SUCH ASSISTANCE MUST CLEARLY
TAKE
INTO ACCOUNT MANY FACTORS
INCLUDING THOSE TOUCHED UPON IN THIS MESSAGE.
BYROADE

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